



# GROUNDCOVER


NEWS AND SOLUTIONS FROM THE GROUND UP

DECEMBER 2013 VOLUME 4 ISSUE 12

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Groove**  
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# Gifts of life found in people and nature and our shared journey



by Susan Beckett  
Publisher

Gratitude is a platitude this time of year, but holidays are tailor-made for those like me who see what is missing far more often than what is present. So firstly, I am grateful for the forbearance of the people in my life who see the caring behind the critiques and know I appreciate them without hearing it on a regular basis.

Though there is no denying encroaching age, I'm grateful I still have mostly pain-free days filled with the tasks of ordinary living, punctuated by walks with friends. Strolling through Bird Hills, I am awed by the canopy and carpet of luminescent leaves. Return-

ing weeks later, the thickened but still-bright leaves radiate from under a dusting of white-white snow, recalling the lacy pattern left on my mother's chocolate cake once the powdered-sugar-covered doily was carefully lifted from its surface.

Dancing with my husband and friends at the Groundcover Groove reminded me how delightful it is, moving my body to music and riffing with others in the process. I'm thankful to Eddy who taught me a new move and personified the expression "dance like no one is watching." He was so captivating that we all watched and appreciated how he shared his joy with us.

Long-time friends enrich my life immeasurably and I am especially thankful for Jeff Richmond, who entertained me with his hand-created crossword puzzles when we were in college and does so again each month with the crossword we run in Groundcover.

I'm deeply grateful to Martha Brunell, who reminds me monthly who I am. And to the Christmas cactus, whose nascent blooms bring color back to the world recently gone gray. And to Annie Rose, who shared weekly reflections with me and many others, opening our eyes and hearts to the gifts of life.

My heart fills as I consider my family and the depth they add to my life.

So, too, the growing Groundcover family inspires me daily. From high school and college students to retirees, we are blessed with dedicated, reliable and compassionate volunteers. I am especially grateful to David who has been with us since the beginning and plays a crucial role in getting papers to our vendors five days a week. Our of-

fice volunteers, who arrange their lives around their weekly (or more often) stints, orienting new vendors and outfitting returning vendors, inspire me. I am moved by the volunteer writers, cartoonists, photographers and editors who carve out the time to make Groundcover News a quality publication. And our at-large volunteers who work with vendors to improve their skills, bake cookies and cakes to help with celebrations, serve on our boards, and work on marketing, ad sales and design. And to our advertisers, the faith organizations and others who allow us to sell on their property and help us with managing our business. And to Elmo's T-shirts, who outfits every new vendor with a screened Groundcover T-shirt, out of his commitment to see that everyone get off to the best possible fresh start.

It has been noted that we have the nicest vendors in the entire country, for which I am immensely grateful. Seeing an existing vendor reach out to some-

one they see struggling, mentoring them, and bringing them into the community, fills my tank for weeks. Hearing from customers how much they enjoy chatting with the person they buy from, reminds me of the bridges we are building and the promise of a future of inclusion. Customers who take the time to let us know what they look forward to and what they'd like to see changed in Groundcover content, remind me that people are out there and they do care about what we print. Those who share how their perceptions and attitudes have changed as a result of reading Groundcover motivate me to continue looking deeper into the shared human experience that underlies our varying circumstances.

These are all central to our continued existence, as are you, our readers. Thank you for your support of Groundcover and the hard-working people who sell it to you. We all wish you blessings for the holiday season and year to come.

## GROUNDCOVER MISSION:

*Groundcover News exists to create opportunity and a voice for low-income people while taking action to end homelessness and poverty.*

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## Christmas reverie

by Tony S.  
Groundcover Vendor

A good night's sleep, the sun shining on my face, the smell of breakfast – eggs, bacon and donuts from the store. Little ones waking you up to come see. The Christmas tree is shining. You know your work is done so you grab yourself a coffee and you watch young and old just having fun.

You turn to your loved ones, who you hold dear, and thank God for this Christmas, for this is another year I shall hold dear forevermore.

Merry Christmas and Peace to all!

## December Calendar of Events

**December 1 – World AIDS Day.** Worldwide event held since 1988 uniting people in the fight against HIV, show their support for people living with HIV, and commemorate people who have died. More info: [www.worldaidsday.org](http://www.worldaidsday.org) and [worldaidsweekum.wordpress.com/](http://worldaidsweekum.wordpress.com/) for events at U-M.

**December 1-8 – Buy Local Week.** Give a gift to your community by supporting local, independently-owned businesses. Events and shopping deals throughout Ann Arbor. More info: [www.thinklocalfirst.net](http://www.thinklocalfirst.net), or call (734) 730-6905.

**December 3/10/17 – Tuesday Résumé Clinics,** 9-11 a.m. Learn how to construct a résumé and receive professional advice and editing. Washtenaw County Michigan Works! Career Transition Center, Key Bank Building, 2nd Floor, 301 West Michigan Ave., Ypsilanti. More info: (734) 544-6799; TDD (800) 649-3777.

**December 4-8 – Rockin' for the Hungry 2013 Food Drive,** 6 a.m. - 7 p.m. (through 12/7) / 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. (12/8). Food Gatherers' largest annual outdoor food drive, featuring live radio broadcasts from Ann Arbor's 107one FM. All non-perishable food items accepted. Kroger - Maple Road location, 400 South Maple Rd., Ann Arbor.

**December 7 – 1st Annual "Go, Santa, Go!" 5K fundraiser,** 10 a.m. Be part

of a new holiday tradition, by joining thousands of Santas and elves as they hit the streets of Ypsilanti. Participants will receive their choice of Santa or Elf attire to wear while running. Portion of proceeds go to support SOS Community Services. \$40/person; register in advance. Rolling Hills Park, 7660 Stony Creek Rd., Ypsilanti. More info and to register: [nrroadracing.com/races/dec-07-gosantago-ypsilanti-mi](http://nrroadracing.com/races/dec-07-gosantago-ypsilanti-mi).

**December 13 – Growing Hope Monthly Community Potluck and Sustainability Film Series,** 6-9 p.m. A monthly event to cultivate community and engage anyone interested in sustainable communities, urban farming, and healthy food access. All are invited (including kids) to share in a meal and discussion with friends and neighbors. Film screening of 2011 documentary *The Economics of Happiness* immediately following potluck (roughly 7 p.m.). Please bring a dish to pass, and RSVP. Ypsilanti Public Library Downtown Branch, 922 West Michigan Ave., Ypsilanti. More info: [erin@growinghope.net](mailto:erin@growinghope.net), (734) 786-8401.

**December 20 – "Peace Generator" Monthly World-Healing Peace Circle,** 7-9 p.m. Join others from all walks of life in silent prayer or focused meditation toward peace, understanding, joy, and healing for your family, the world, and yourself. Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth, 704 Airport Blvd., Ann Arbor. More info: [www.peacegenerator.org](http://www.peacegenerator.org), or email [info@peacegenerator.org](mailto:info@peacegenerator.org).

## What has been revealed



by Rev. Dr.  
**Martha Brunell**  
Groundcover  
Contributor

Last month, I began my fourth year of writing for Groundcover News. While preparing this column, I decided to dig up my old copies and reread those 36 former columns. I was curious to see if there were patterns in what had bubbled to the surface and made it to the final edit, column after column. There were columns based in recent experiences and columns that went way back to moments in my childhood. My growing children showed up from time to time. In different columns I was walking the Mackinac Bridge, buying shoes, discovering a product at the Ann Arbor Farmers Market, saying thanks, considering snap judgments, observing a crack in an old hacienda, talking about cow paths, paying attention to growing corn, or pondering the multiple meanings of the word *vessel*. I quoted poets and favorite children's authors, and once lamented a recent dry winter when my snowshoes lay unused in the car.

Back in the 1930s, creative writing teacher Brenda Ueland reminded us that we can't write a line without revealing something. She was certainly right about that. In my column review, I realized more fully that writing for Groundcover News is one location in which I reveal my path in the world as a spiritual director. Over my adult years, I have trained and worked as a pastor, a chaplain, a teacher, a writer and a spiritual director. Among these roles, spiritual director may be the one that is least familiar to you. Across many spiritual and wisdom traditions, some of us have been trained to listen at a deep level, so that others can bear witness to their unfolding lives and to

the presence or movement of spirit, the holy, or sacredness in those same lives. Spiritual directors hold open a safe space for others to recognize, receive, reflect, and respond more fully to what is happening for them. We don't understand ourselves as fixers or helpers, but rather as those who glimpse with another, or with others, the wholeness of who they are.

Toward the end of my time at Bethlehem UCC, I was having a professional picture taken. The photographer kept reminding me to lean slightly toward her. When I nervously laughed and said that my pulling back probably revealed a discomfort with having my picture taken, she observed something else: "No, you are used to stepping back in all ways so that others can be more fully present."

She recognized a spiritual director without even naming it. In the same time frame, one of my parishioners at Bethlehem commented about me, "Martha sees the holy around every ordinary corner. I want to be able to see like that." His words also form a beautiful description of how spiritual directors engage in the world.

In this holiday season of gift giving, hear my thanks for the gift of this column space where I can write and share in a way I cherish. During my Ann Arbor years, I had an interesting array of conversations about current columns with vendors, staff, volunteers, and assorted readers of the paper. All of those exchanges, usually unexpected, enriched me. Thank you again. If you would like to learn about spiritual direction for individuals, groups, or in retreat settings, contact me at [marthabrunell@gmail.com](mailto:marthabrunell@gmail.com). It would be a joy to hear from you. I wonder what the next three years of columns will reveal.

## Warming shelter and rotating shelter open

People without other indoor shelter options for the night can go to the Washtenaw Shelter Association's Delonis Center. The first 50 people who arrive are accepted. Those who are regularly without shelter and are living substance free can apply at Delonis to be part of the rotating shelter program. Twenty-five selected men are hosted by faith organizations in the area, generally for a week at a time, through the winter. Both programs offer shelter from 7 p.m. until 7 a.m. When the temperature falls below 10 degrees, people can also take refuge at the warming center throughout the day.

## Home Is an Identity

by Eddy Powell

Groundcover Vendor

I lived at Miller Manor for 18 years. I played the guitar in the streets.

But once you're out there in the street so long, it's like you become institutionalized in the street.

When you're homeless you lose your sense of pride.

When you're out there, depression comes. Depression is not something you have to be born into. You don't know depression till you've been out there.

You worry about how to get clean. You think about getting a hotel room – because you can get soap, toothpaste, a bed – but then all your money goes there.

It's hard to better yourself.

Vendors think they can go to a shelter, save some money and then get a place. But if you have a record, any kind – felony, debt, slow payment – people don't want to rent to you – even if there's been improvement.

People have to have a place to keep warm.

Home is an identity. A place to start.



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# SAPAC promotes respect, offers services for those sexually assaulted at U-M

by Ian Mark  
Groundcover Contributor

Every year, millions of young individuals across America move out of their parents' houses to go to college. This is an exciting time, as these new students enjoy living on their own, usually for the first time in their lives. However, there is a disturbing side of college life that many fail to recognize – an alarmingly high frequency of sexual assault incidents on campuses every year.

Statistics show that among women on college campuses across the nation, one in four will be sexually assaulted throughout their academic careers. This statistic speaks to just how common this phenomenon is. Unfortunately, the University of Michigan is no exception. The pandemic crime afflicts our beloved University just like the rest of the nation. Additionally, stalking plagues campuses, with as many as 13 percent of college women reporting being stalked.

Thankfully, the University has a resource to combat these crimes: The Sexual Assault Prevention and Awareness Center (SAPAC). Located in the Michigan Union, SAPAC is dedicated to fighting sexual assault on campus. There are a number of goals the center hopes to achieve. Among these are educating the University of Michigan community about sexual assault, intimate partner violence, sexual harassment, and stalking. Additionally, SAPAC also works to support the rights of the sexually abused. Finally, they provide services for survivors as well as for survivors' friends and family.

The workers of SAPAC often find themselves engaged in dispelling myths on campus about sexual assault. For instance, one common myth is that many women lie about being sexually assaulted. In reality, roughly 0.6 percent – that's less than one out of 100 – of sexual assault claims are false.

Another common myth is that the perpetrator of sexual assault is someone the survivor does not know, evoking the cliché image of a stranger in a dark alley. However, in most cases, the survivor was at least acquainted, if not friends, with the perpetrator before the incident. Many people also believe that sexual assault only occurs at wild frat parties, where the individuals involved were heavily intoxicated. This is also a myth – sexual assault can happen to anyone, and it doesn't always involve excessive amounts of alcohol.

## Peer-Led Support Group

Sexual Assault Prevention and Awareness Center (SAPAC)



Sahana Prasad, a SAPAC volunteer and employee, had the following to say about the organization: "We're one of the only sexual assault prevention organizations I can think of whose entire culture of care and empowerment is survivor-centric. So the whole point is to restore power to people who have had power taken away from them, and to empower them to make their own decisions about how they want to process and heal from their experiences."

Prasad is part of the Networking, Publicity & Activism (NPA) volunteer program at SAPAC. This program organizes and publicizes most of SAPAC's big events. These include the Annual Speak Out, an event providing an open forum for survivors as well as an opportunity for the community to show their support. As part of World AIDS Week – the first week of December – SAPAC is collaborating on an event highlighting the struggles of women infected with HIV. Other events throughout the year include No-Shave November for Consent and the Annual rEVOLUTION Art Show, a week long art display in April showcasing works of art with topics of gender, empowerment, sexism or sexual violence.

No-Shave November for Consent is a month-long program in which members of the Men's Activism program of SAPAC pledge to raise awareness of the importance of consensual sex by neglecting to shave. To do so, they

wear a shirt that states "Ask Me About My Beard." When people ask them about their beard, they inform them of the importance of consensual sex. The program aims to spur dialogue on the subject and draw attention to this issue around campus.

SAPAC's professional staff offers walk-in and scheduled appointments for any and all survivors looking for someone to listen, advice on where to go for help, information for making a formal complaint, support in deciding how to talk to a friend or a family member, and more. Concerned friends and family

members are also encouraged to contact the office, as SAPAC acknowledges that it can be difficult for supporters to know how to respond to a survivor.

In addition, SAPAC offers a weekly drop-in, confidential support group led by peers. Last but not least, the office provides a 24-hour crisis line that provides confidential crisis-intervention and information and referral services for any survivors of sexual assault, dating or domestic violence, and stalking.

The support services offered by SAPAC are available to anyone affiliated with the university – that includes students, faculty and staff. In addition, many people ask if there are support services for male survivors. SAPAC offers support for not only men and women, but people of all gender identities.

While the problem of sexual assault is still all-too-common on college campuses, students at U-M can at least take solace in the fact that there are dedicated, compassionate individuals at SAPAC determined to support survivors and alleviate the problem.

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## Camp Take Notice is Homeward Bound

by Ian Mark  
Groundcover Contributor

On Sunday, November 17, the Ann Arbor-based non-profit organization MISSION hosted an open-house at the welcome center where they hope to start Homeward Bound, a safe haven for the homeless. The open-house was held so that members of the Ann Arbor community could see the property, learn about MISSION's plan, and meet the individuals behind Homeward Bound as well as those in need of it.

The story of Homeward Bound can be traced back to Camp Take Notice, which was a tent community for those in need that housed as many as 78 individuals at any given time. In June of 2012, Camp Take Notice was shut down when state police evicted everyone from the Michigan Department of Transportation-owned property. While some of those living at Camp Take Notice did find and keep housing, most weren't so fortunate.

"People are staying under bridges, in the woods," said Vesta Smith-Campbell, the Chair of the Homeward Bound Capital Campaign.



Open house at 3501 Stone School Rd. for what will eventually become Homeward Bound Welcome Center was held November 17.

MISSION, the organization behind Camp Take Notice, realized that the need for shelters in Ann Arbor was increasing – not decreasing – so they began the search for another property to create a refuge for the homeless. In 2011, the number of unsheltered homeless in the city hovered around 43. As of 2013, the count is at 166.

In June of 2013, roughly after a year after Camp Take Notice was dissipated, MISSION acquired 3½ acres of

property at 3501 Stone School Road, just off I-94 between Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti. At the open house, volunteers toured visitors around the property and through the home, detailing their impressive plans for the location, and responding to visitors' questions and concerns.

One nearby resident worried that the Homeward Bound encampment would make an already-unsafe area worse. She cited the lack of streetlights, people loitering in the bus stop shelter and the lack of adult supervision for the young children who walk down Stone School on their way to Bryant Elementary School. Seth, the welcome-tent tour guide, assured her that MISSION would work with residents to address those shortcomings. He affirmed that being good neighbors is a paramount goal of the Homeward Bound community.

Currently, the homeless cannot stay at the location because it is zoned as a single-family property by the city of Ann Arbor. As such, having the city rezone the property is the number-one goal on MISSION's agenda.

Steve Bemis, a lawyer who has been involved with the project for roughly a year, said, "To get permission from City Council, they would want to know their voters are in favor." He also clarified how crucial the rezoning is. "This won't happen unless we get the zoning change we need."

To achieve this goal, MISSION invites members of the Ann Arbor community to spread awareness of the project and sign the group's petition. MISSION also gladly welcomes any invitation to speak at organizations to gather support for the cause.

If MISSION does receive the rezoning they need, there is no doubt they will make effective use of the property.

Throughout the open house, several members detailed the plan and vision they have for the organization. Brian Durrance, the president of MISSION, envisions a safe, supportive community free from drugs or alcohol, where the homeless can get back on their feet.


"We want it to feel as un-institutional as possible," he said.

Roland Graf, a University of Michigan School of Art and Design professor whose background is in architecture, outlined a plan for the property. The house on the property is being turned into a multi-purpose welcome center, where members can gather, eat meals and do laundry. The rest of the property provides room for tents or inexpensive, small housing units, such as the tiny houses described in the September 2013 issue of Groundcover. Graf's plan would accommodate 100-120 individuals.

The previous owner of the home had a similar vision for the property after she was forced into foreclosure; she wanted it to be a safe house for abused individuals or a homeless shelter. Sadly, she lost the home after her pension was reduced, which was when MISSION obtained it for \$165,000. She and her daughter were in the first group to tour the property with MISSION, and her eyes filled with tears of joy upon hearing their plans.

Alonzo Young, a former resident of Camp Take Notice, was at the event advocating for Homeward Bound. Young attended Washtenaw Community College and obtained several degrees while struggling with housing-instability. "I was determined. I was homeless, but I had to do what I had to do." He credits Camp Take Notice with helping him along the way. "I never gave up. It was hard, but I did it. Just because you're homeless doesn't mean you can't do this." Young now plans on transferring to a university and going into social work. He works with MISSION on fundraising and promoting the organization. In May, he will obtain yet another degree.

Currently, the project is asking the Ann Arbor community for donations and volunteers. With winter in full effect, warm blankets, linens, sleeping bags, and coats are welcome in addition to monetary donations for furthering the project. Volunteers are needed to help spread the word and support the rezoning initiative. Last but not least, anyone interested in cooking Sunday meals for 25-50 homeless people would be greatly appreciated. For more details, call (734) 531-8368.



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## This Town: Two Parties and a Funeral

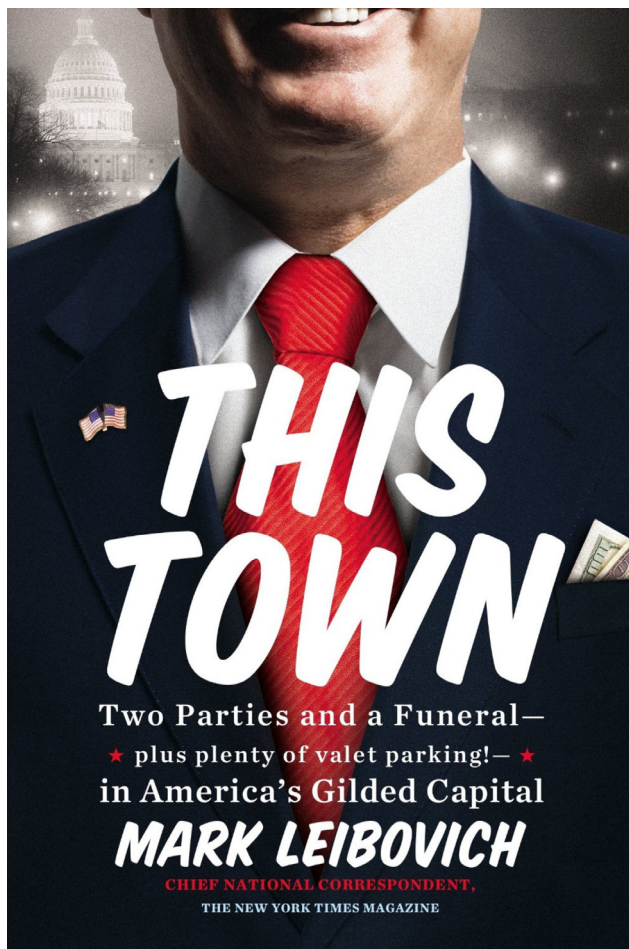
by Michael Leibovich

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Book Review by David KE Dodge  
Groundcover Contributor

*This Town*, by Michael Leibovich, is an established Washington, D.C. journalist's expose of the social life and personal foibles of the people who exercise cynical control over our nation's policy formation and implementation in its capital city. While much has been produced detailing the corruption by specific people performing specific acts, resulting in specific inadequacies in some limited realm of federal oversight of a specific industry, Leibovich ignores such details, and instead gives the reader a sweeping panorama of the nature of the people engaging in such corruption, and the nature of the relationships through which their corruption is spawned. The parties described by Leibovich are called by a wide variety of terms, including "The Club," "The People Who Count," "the players," and "this town."

Leibovich illuminates for view a sordid symbiosis of groups of players which seamlessly morph into complementary roles: holders of elected or appointed office whose predominant concern is self-promotion; lobbying firms and industry groups, comprised of persons who are always shifting their position on a continuum between outright lobbying and purportedly more innocent "consulting"; members of the media who confound the role of media as integral to – indeed, the most important part of – the events they are entrusted with reporting; celebrities of the entertainment industry who lend their luster to the other groups, while basking in the glory of Importance and Power which "this town" exudes; and, finally, the special interests, who are the most intimidating of all, for being both the players who are most generously benefited by the system of peculiar alliances, and who are also the parties who wield the lucre which glues the system together and which keeps The



People Who Count scurrying about making contacts.

The Club comprises no more than a very small portion of the population of the D.C. metropolitan area, but they exert control of the levers of government in a degree far exceeding their numbers. By their behavior members of The Club communally betray arrested moral development, with an attendant morbidity of values, which suggest that they broach heavily on being communally sociopathic. Their membership opens to them relationships which serve as funny-mirrors, by making their corrupt moral visages seem virtuous. They measure their true worth using defective rulers, and so convince themselves of their magnificence.

I learned of the existence of *This Town* while viewing an interview of the author on "Moyers & Company." The following day I went to the library to enquire about the book, and learned that there was a waiting list exceeding 30 patrons, for three copies on order. I purchased my own copy at a local bookstore. The last time I checked, there was a waiting list of 91, for 17 copies, at AADL.

*This Town* is well worth a read. Buy it. Read it. Keep it.

## Groovin' with Groundcover

by Susan Beckett and Greg Hoffman

Groundcover supporters steadily flowed into the LIVE nightclub on First Street in Ann Arbor for the Wednesday night music benefit on November 13. Jennifer Crorey and Ian Mark from the University of Michigan Groundcover Student Group were there to greet and orient them for an evening of fun and prizes.

F.U.B.A.R. provided great, familiar music for dancing and singing along in the first set. Hullabaloo followed up with memorable horns and interesting arrangements with an underlying beat accentuated by their bass guitarist dancing around the room as he played. Many in the crowd relaxed in their booths or large couches and soaked in the music from both groups.

Several Groundcover vendors joined supporters on the excellent, smooth wood dance floor, sharing new dance moves and enjoying an evening of fun together. Eddy Powell was a particularly entertaining fixture on the dance floor, welcoming others to dance with him.

Prizes from Zingerman's, Miles of Golf, Quality 16 Theaters, Mainstreet Ventures Restaurants, Lake Forest Golf Course and the MDen made the evening even more enjoyable for the lucky



Bill Kunz of Hullabaloo on trombone.

recipients. Thank you to the Groundcover News Advisory Board for putting this together, to the U-M Groundcover Student Group for working the event, to the bands for donating their time and considerable talent, to LIVE for donating the space, to the gift card donors, and to all those came to and supported the event, raising nearly \$800 and spreading the word about Groundcover News.

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## Preaching Puccini

by Noah H. Burns, with Karen L. Totten  
Groundcover Contributors

*This piece is dedicated to my wonderful teachers of many years, Margot and Frederick Amrine.*

Here is a profile of one of opera's greatest masters, whose work, and the implicit philosophy of democracy and social justice in it, deserves an audience with the Groundcover readership.

December 22 is the 155<sup>th</sup> birthday of Giacomo Puccini, the Italian opera composer. Along with Giuseppe Verdi, he is considered by many to be the greatest composer of opera from Italy, and his death in 1924 brought to an end the golden age of Romantic Italian opera that began in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century with the expert composer and musical comedian Gioacchino Rossini.

Aside from being an interesting cultural tidbit to throw out to snobby relatives over the holidays, why should we care about Puccini's birthday? Opera is remote from the modern world. Its long, complicated musical dramas with orchestras and, quite often, pantaloons hardly seem relevant to the smartphone generation. And isn't opera simply an expensive diversion for snobs and scholars, and not something that should concern practical people and those who have to live in the real world?

The first difficulty can be easily dis-



**Giacomo Puccini, 1858-1924 -- one of history's greatest composers and a passionate champion of underdogs in his operas.**

missed: I think most people would agree that a decreasing attention span is not something we should encourage. And the stories of opera – often ridiculous, occasionally profound, like any story well told – can move even the most indifferent. And while the second difficulty – elitism – may have some truth to it, the stereotypical wealthy snob does not represent a majority of the typical opera-going audience. Lovers of opera come from all walks of life and possess widely varying degrees of technical musical knowledge.

But why should we care specifically about Puccini's operas (other than a welcome lack of

pantaloons therein)? In order to answer this, we will have to take the scenic route... but be assured that the sights along the way are well worth seeing.

\* \* \*  
Journalism often covers the lives of

the powerful, the successful, and the wealthy because that's what society tells us is important. The fashion accessories of celebrities often get more coverage than the suffering of the homeless, the poor, and the sick. When reports

air about serious issues that affect this group of people, such as healthcare policy and education, a large proportion of the focus is on how it will affect the current political players, or, in other words, the people with the power.

The people in Puccini's operas, for the most part, do not have power. The heroes of Puccini's *La bohème* (The Bohemian Girl) are starving artists, obscure and without many prospects. (Puccini himself experienced such hardship: while he was a student in Milan, he nearly starved because he did not have enough money for food.) He lavishes these protagonists with music that another composer would have reserved for mythic heroes or kings and queens. And audiences, full of regular folks and connoisseurs alike, cry for Puccini's heroine Mimi when she suc-

see PUCCINI, page 9

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Fill in the squares so that each row, column, and 3-by-3 box contain the numbers 1 through 9.

Cryptoquote

ZYDPDZP UVB EVTBJH CZWJ  
RWZTNKJ ZP RUDB KDRRKJ JVWRU  
RUVF YKVLITJB ZW JVWRUATVMJB.  
— OZKRVDWJ

Hint: V=Λ

Solutions on page 11

Groundcover Vendor Code

While Groundcover is a non-profit, and paper vendors are considered contracted self-employers, we still have expectations of how vendors should conduct themselves while selling and representing the paper.

The following list is our Vendor Code of Conduct, which every vendor reads and signs before receiving a badge and papers. We request that if you discover a vendor violating any tenets of the Code, please contact us and provide as many details as possible. Our paper and our vendors should be positively impacting our County.

All vendors must agree to the following code of conduct:

- Groundcover will be distributed for a voluntary donation. I agree not to ask for more than the cover price or solicit donations by any other means.
- I will only sell current issues of Groundcover.
- I agree not to sell additional goods or products when selling the paper or to panhandle, including panhandling with only one paper.
- I will wear and display my badge when selling papers.
- I will only purchase the paper from Groundcover Staff and will not sell to or buy papers from other Groundcover vendors, especially vendors who have been suspended or terminated.

- I agree to treat all customers, staff, and other vendors respectfully. I will not “hard sell,” threaten, harass or pressure customers, staff, or other vendors verbally or physically.
- I will not sell Groundcover under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- I understand that I am not a legal employee of Groundcover but a contracted worker responsible for my own well-being and income.
- I understand that my badge is property of Groundcover and will not deface it. I will present my badge when purchasing the papers.
- I agree to stay off private property when selling Groundcover.
- I understand to refrain from selling on public buses, federal property or stores unless there is permission from the owner.
- I agree to stay at least one block away from another vendor in downtown areas. I will also abide by the Vendor corner policy.
- I understand that Groundcover strives to be a paper that covers topics of homelessness and poverty while providing sources of income for the homeless. I will try to help in this effort and spread the word.

If you see any Groundcover News vendors not abiding by the code of conduct, please report the activity to: [contact@groundcovernews.com](mailto:contact@groundcovernews.com) 734-972-0926

ACROSS

1. South Carolina town
5. Awaken
10. Narrative
14. Overdue
15. Sizable
16. Dashboard instrument
17. Marty Feldman role
18. "... he thanked Heaven that in a world of much evil there was still so good a thing \_\_\_\_\_."
19. Sword
20. Louvre exhibit
23. Time zone (abbr.)
24. Don't exist
25. Practice fighting
27. Brewer's need
32. \_\_\_\_\_ Gantry
35. Federal agency (abbr.)
39. Hebrew month
40. Executioner's need
41. Hebrew month
42. Percentages
44. Actor/director Pitlik
45. Type of fluted column
47. Nerd
48. Wildebeests
49. Floor
50. Van Halen
52. Again
54. Zest
59. Without exception
61. Medieval weapon
66. Stream
68. Rodent
69. Laborer
70. Patella
71. New York island
72. Advantage
73. Scottish island
74. \_\_\_\_\_ Point, Scotland
75. Back end

DOWN

1. Minnesota Twins outfielder Tony
2. Pilsner
3. Make amends
4. Repeat showing
5. Happy
6. "\_\_\_\_\_ on Down the Road"
7. Vehicle

Astronomy 101

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8. Tropical fruit
9. Strips
10. Summer (French)
11. 1973 movie
12. Desserts
13. TV news anchor Huntley
21. Pig dwelling
22. Permit passage
26. Beside
28. Sensory organ
29. Aphorism
30. Full
31. Cornered in the branches
33. Son of Isaac
34. Radiation measurement units
35. Playwright Simon
36. Tropical plant
37. Idaho resort area

38. 1979 movie
43. Travel on snow
46. Man's name
51. Breakfast food
53. *The \_\_\_\_\_*, 1939 movie
55. Escort
56. German city
57. Tanzanian city
58. Command
59. Boats
60. Piece of sausage
62. Part
63. Mythological race
64. Egyptian goddess
65. Bird's abode
67. Actor Christopher

Puzzle by Jeff Richmond



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8:30 am and 10:00 am ~ Worship  
10:00 am ~ Church School

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December 1 ~ Typhoon Hqaiyan Fundraising Concert  
6:00 pm at Bethlehem Church  
December 8 ~ Ann Arbor Youth Chorale Winter Concert  
2:00 pm at Bethlehem Church  
December 20 ~ Parking Lot Pretzels  
(Sale begins at noon)  
December 24 ~ Christmas Eve Worship Services  
5:00 pm Family Worship Service  
7:00 pm Worship of Lessons and Carols  
11:00 pm Worship / Communion  
December 24-25 and January 1  
Church offices closed

an invitation to grow in spirit and serve with joy



## Preaching Puccini

continued from page 7

cumbers to tuberculosis. For a moment, Puccini is able to touch something that allows anyone to empathize with the grief-stricken friends and lover of this poor, meek girl who died from poverty as much as from disease.

While praising Puccini's *La fanciulla del West* (The Girl of the Golden West) for its music and redemptive message, critics often puzzle as to why Puccini devoted such a grand opera and such heroic music to such lowly people as dirt-poor miners and a virgin bar matron. Of course, the message of the opera is that every single human being, of any station class, or origin, has a divine spark in her or his soul that can be saved. Puccini's paean to the worth of every human being, and the critics' incomprehension, show us just how misunderstood he sometimes is.

*La fanciulla del West* is built on a Bible verse from Psalm 51, which Minnie interprets for the miners as saying that there is "no sinner in the world to whom the path is denied to redemption." She soon learns that the man she loves is a street bandit. At first she rejects him, but after he is shot she realizes that she cannot let him die, and protects him from the sheriff. As the bandit, Johnson, tries to escape town, the miners, who have had their gold stolen by Johnson's gang, capture and are about to hang him when Minnie arrives (on horseback, toting a rifle) and convinces them to forgive Johnson. She then rides with him into the sunrise, indicating that their redemption has only just begun. Minnie gives her strength to those who need it most; for years she lived amongst the miners, comforting them and teaching them to read. And now, she takes Johnson down the path that leads to growth and a new life.

But it is in Puccini's final, unfinished opera, *Turandot*, based on a legend from *One Thousand and One Nights*, that Puccini's worldview comes to full flower. This is Puccini's only mythical-subject opera, and at first the characters appear distant and even callous. The suffering chorus is beaten back on the orders of the cold, snobbish Princess Turandot, who has decreed that any man wishing to marry her will have to answer three riddles, and, failing that test, will be beheaded.

The Unknown Prince enters, and is reunited with his blind, exiled father, the King of Tartar, and a slave girl, Liu, who helped him escape. But the Prince sees Turandot, and instead of fleeing from her with his family, falls desperately in love with her and agrees to take on her challenge. He answers the riddles cor-

rectly, but Turandot's pride forces her to beg for her freedom to her father. But where her father, the Emperor, declines, the Prince agrees, and offers her a way out: if she discovers his name before sunrise, he will die. Unfortunately, his father and Liu are discovered, and Liu is tortured to get her to reveal the name. Instead, Liu kills herself. The Prince still insists on marrying Turandot.

Why does the Prince harbor such a passion for such a brutal woman? And how can he ignore the death of the innocent Liu? The climax of the opera was to have been a scene in which the Prince kisses Turandot, and melts her icy nature. Puccini, however, died of throat cancer before he could write the music. But he did write sketches that nearly complete the opera, and we can see from what remains that the opera isn't really about the Prince taming the shrewish princess. Instead, the Prince's true purpose is revealed when he openly tells Turandot his name: Calaf. He puts his life in her hands. In essence, he has, through an act of loving submission, engendered a pure and selfless love in a woman full of hate and anger.

It was revealed in the second act that Turandot began this crusade against men because the soul of her ancestor, Lou-Ling cried out to her from the ages, and told her of her suffering at the hands of a conquering man. Calaf heals her wound when he chooses not to conquer, but to comfort. And in doing so, he frees Turandot from hatred and revenge, which have caused the destruction of the very thing that they were to have avenged: the death of an innocent girl.

Turandot feels remorse for her actions, and Calaf tells her, "Your glory began with your first tear." Remorse, compassion and selfless love have brought the high princess down to earth, and transformed that world from one of violence and cruelty to one of love and forgiveness. As Puccini described his plans for the ending, "These two beings, who stand outside the world, are transformed into human beings through love, and this love must take possession of everybody on the stage in an orchestral peroration."

In Puccini's operas, then, we see that there is there is the capacity for love in every heart; and in the theatre, through his musical creations, he brings it out in us. Perhaps the best summary

of the moral center of Puccini's works, and their democratic nature, is a quote from Vincent van Gogh, who described his own work thus: "What am I in the eyes of most people – a nonentity, an eccentric, or an unpleasant person – somebody who has no position in society and will never have; in short, the lowest of the low. All right, then – even if that were absolutely true, then I should one day like to show by my work what such an eccentric, such a nobody, has in his heart."

Though van Gogh was unsuccessful critically during his lifetime, his works are in much the same position as Puccini's: admired by people who don't take their messages to heart. But if Puccini or van Gogh can make the uncaring and unfeeling empathize with such a pitiable creature as Mimi or such a wretch as Johnson, even if it's just for a moment, then there is indeed the possibility that these people can be made to see the tremendous suffering that surrounds them.

Opera alone won't do it, but it's a start. And for those who suffer as Puccini's characters do, his works can provide a semblance of consolation, of the reassuring certainty that somebody, somewhere understood – and indeed, though separated by time and culture, gave a cry that echoes through the ages – calling for justice and mercy and love of all human beings, from the homeless to murderers to kings, who are often murderers, one that resounds in the spiritual essence of us all.

Interested in learning more about opera? Consider the following suggestions:

- Begin with what you know. Perhaps you have heard a piece from opera on one of the current television shows devoted to singing competitions. "Nessum Dorma," from *Turandot*, has been sung frequently, as well as "O mio babbino

caro," from *Gianni Schicchi*. Aretha Franklin did a wonderful version of "Nessum Dorma"; her Italian is a bit rough, but she did a fabulous job of expressing the emotion of the piece in her stand-in performance at the 1998 Grammys for Pavarotti, who was ailing and couldn't go on stage.

- Language differences may take some getting used to. Knowing at least the basic story enhances appreciation of the music, so look for recordings that have libretti (lyrics), or at least a detailed synopsis.
- Many bargain- and mid-priced (\$10-\$20) recordings of opera can be purchased on eBay. In addition, the Ann Arbor District Library has a good selection of opera recordings for free.
- And of course, there is the Internet. Check out opera recordings on YouTube showcasing everyone from household-name celebrities like Luciano Pavarotti, Enrico Caruso and Maria Callas, to lesser-known legends such as Nicolai Gedda and Montserrat Caballé. Also, [classicalsearchlight.com](http://classicalsearchlight.com) is an outstanding resource for beginning and seasoned opera-enthusiasts alike, with "essential listening" guides, charts detailing opera history, insightful essays on specific works, and recommended recordings.

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## Tony's continued tales

by Tony S.  
Groundcover Vendor

Sunday is a big day for me. I like being the first one at church so I can greet the parishioners as they come in and let them know what I heard that day – what weather is expected, if the sun will be out soon, or how the Tigers or Lions are doing. I tell them to watch and see; the Lions have a surprise for us this year.

Then I go in sometimes to get the message. It is important and it is a good feeling. Just before church is ending, I come out to sell the paper and say, "Have a good day!" I especially look for a new person, someone who has not gotten the paper before. That is a gift for me!

It is very touching to my heart when people come by to thank me for the paper and the story that touched them! Sometimes I'll work from morning until late at night. I prayed for strong feet and I believe He gave them to me. People pass by asking how I do this, standing here so long. I just smile and say it is a gift that was given to me.

I stay until the bars close. Seeing what

goes on then, I say to myself that I am glad I have 12 Steps in me. I help some who want it. I flag down taxis for those who need it, and if they are lost, I am there as a helping hand. Seeing young ladies falling down, I can tell you that drinking and high heels don't mix – that is one thing that men have over women! When men fall, we don't say it was about the shoes we had on.

As everything closes, a friendly hand from the Black Pearl restaurant waves to me as they lock their doors. Many of my friends come in and out of there, and the food is so good, I think the angels are helping them in the kitchen! Dine at the Black Pearl and you will know you have been blessed and will come back for blessing again.

So the night is over, but not for me. I walk down to a late-night dinner at the Fleetwood, Eastern Flame or Pizza Pino. I like them all. I love my soup and beef at the Eastern Flame. I enjoy breakfast to burgers at the Fleetwood, and the waitress on Fridays is charming. Pizza Pino has more than just pizza on the menu. The seating is great with a big-screen TV tuned to the sports channel – you got me! And they stay open until 4 a.m. on the weekend.

Then I return to my place to sleep. I put out my sleeping bag, ready to call it a night, when my friends show up for a bit to eat. It is the skunk and the raccoon. The skunk is so pretty, black on white, with that long tail curled up, and the raccoon with the rings around his eyes, sitting up with a big smile on his face. It is a good feeling to be friends. We enjoy a peanut butter sandwich as I throw them each a piece to eat, and after a few sandwich wads, my two friends leave.

The skunk returns with his mate. They do a little walk back and forth, then they go off into the woods. Then the raccoon and his mate appear and does the same walk-by, to show me his very pretty mate. It was like a dream!

As my animal friends leave and I rest my head, I just think I have lost a lot of stuff, and had my heart broken by the one I once loved, and lost my best friend; but God has given me a gift I thank him for each day – my corner on Liberty and Main.

Things are things and we all have stuff, and my love will be there – true love never dies. A nun once said to me on my corner, "You are double-blessed."

I thanked her and said I am working on the triple and we all know what the home run is – and may we all hit one!

The winter last year was very hard on our sales. It is hard to sell a newspaper in the rain, and we had a lot of that. I am a giving person and believe that it will come back – and I do see that. Having an ex-wife who is raising a grandchild, I try to be a good grandfather. I don't see them much because they don't live near here and the car they have is old and giving them trouble. I send them what I can, not letting them know that selling a newspaper for a dollar isn't always easy.

Sometimes I think I am the mailman – wind, rain, snow, I must be out there on the go! The mailman is a good man and a good friend. He and the FedEx man and the UPS man, they all pass my corner with a good word to each other.

Now you know what my heart and eyes see. You know you love your job when you are away and you miss it! Peace to all!





## Student group boosts Groundcover

by Ian Mark  
Groundcover Contributor

Since Groundcover News was founded in 2010, the organization has benefited greatly from the dedication and hard work of various volunteers. With such a large college population close by at University of Michigan, it is no surprise that many students have set aside time to work with the organization. While there have been a number of involved students, there was never an official group for them. However, we are happy to announce that there is now an official Groundcover News Student Group at the University of Michigan.

For students interested in volunteer work around campus, Groundcover offers something special. There are countless, wonderful philanthropic organizations at U-M, but the Groundcover group is unique in that it provides a voice for those struggling with low-incomes and housing-instability. Additionally, students get the rewarding experience of interacting directly with the individuals they are helping. Most students have at least witnessed the sad reality of poverty in Ann Arbor, and Groundcover is a means to combat that. The student group is a way for students

to make a difference by helping out those in need.

The aim of the group is to provide an organized, collaborative space for students at the University to help out Groundcover News in different ways. Organizations such as Groundcover can always use more volunteers, so having a dedicated student group to tap the enormous student body at Michigan is a great development. Most recently, students promoted and sold tickets to a concert fundraiser, Groundcover Groove, and several have had articles published in the street paper.

Currently, the group consists of a handful of tightly-knit, passionate students who are dedicated to helping those struggling with low-incomes or housing instability. Being such a newly established organization, there is plenty of room to grow. Regardless of whether students are looking to help out by writing for the paper, promoting the organization, or working directly with vendors, there is a place for them in the group. As an added benefit, there are a number of leadership positions available.

The group has identified a couple goals

they would like to accomplish within their first few months of operation. Through talking to other students, the group has discovered that very few students are even aware of Groundcover News. While the paper sells well throughout the community of Ann Arbor as a whole, many vendors struggle to sell near campus. As such, one problem the student group hopes to tackle is simply promoting the paper on campus.

Being students, the group knows that there are already a thousand-and-one organizations on campus raising awareness for every cause under the sun. Regardless, the group is confident that promoting the paper around campus and making their voice heard is an achievable task.

The student group is small as well as new, which means that any active members will be guaranteed a voice – not drowned out amidst hundreds of members. Volunteering via the student group is also a great way to get experience with marketing, social media marketing, journalism, copy editing, and community action. Regardless of what particular skills or interests a student possesses, the student group will be able to utilize them.

Any students interested in joining the organization can email Jennifer at [jcrorey@umich.edu](mailto:jcrorey@umich.edu). Also, prospective members are welcome to visit the Groundcover office at 423 S. 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Ann Arbor anytime from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays.



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## Cryptoquote Solution

Opinion has caused more trouble  
on this little earth than plagues  
or earthquakes.

– Voltaire

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## Holiday Shortbread

by Lisa Sonnenburg  
Groundcover Contributor

1 lb (4 sticks) softened butter

1 cup fruit sugar (granulated fructose sweetener)

1 pinch baking soda

¼ tsp salt

4 cups all-purpose flour

\*Optional\* ½ cup each green and red candied cherries, diced

### Directions:

Mix ingredients well until it looks like fine sand. Rub flour on rolling pin and on a cutting board. Roll dough out to desired thickness, ¼ - ½ inch. Use a 2" round cookie cutter to cut out cookies. Place cookies on baking sheet. Prick each with a fork in several places. Add 1 piece each of red and green cherries on top. Bake 15-20 minutes at 350° F until light golden



brown. Let cool. For storage, use wax or parchment paper between layers of cookies.

Makes 2-3 dozen.

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### Strange (but Mostly True) Stories About a Mother and her Daughter • Cy Klone © 2013

You kids and your new-fangled fancy-schmancy personal enhancement devices!

I'm not using PEDs; it's called a brush and he does all the work. Are you going to tell me to get off your lawn now?

Well I prefer good old-fashioned natural grooming, and I'll bet my fur is softer and fluffier than yours.

Whatever. Surely you can't claim any sort of insight into what's "natural".

If you're alluding to some of my odder personal preferences, they all still come naturally to me.

You mean like the "natural" way you nibble on buttons and zippers? Or the way you obsess over his sweaty clothes? Nature must have a weird sense of humor, since none of those things are necessary to survive in the wild.

Oooh, big talk from the cat who licks the handle of the brush after he uses it!

I guess the nut didn't fall far from the tree, eh Mom?

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